



## **For Immediate Release**

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## **Residents' Quality of Life Improved Thanks to Federal, State and Local Cooperation**

MUNDELEIN, IL – Thanks to intergovernmental cooperation between federal, state and local government officials and partnerships with private corporations, the Mundelein area received a reprieve from the disturbing noise of train horns that can be heard up to two miles from railroad tracks. With six railroad crossings in Mundelein, two in neighboring Libertyville and one in Vernon Hills, and proposed Federal regulations requiring trains to signal at the crossings, residents frequently found their quality of life affected by the unwanted noise.

In an effort to minimize the disturbance for residents and downtown businesses, the Village of Mundelein partnered with the Federal Railroad Administration, Illinois Commerce Commission, Illinois Department of Transportation, Lake County Division of Transportation, Metra, Railroad Controls Ltd., Villages of Libertyville and Vernon Hills and Canadian National.

This task force worked towards the implementation of an Automated Horn System at each of the village's six railroad crossings. The system was activated on April 12, 2002, and the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety began studying the safety and quality of life benefits of the horn system.

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## **Quality of Life Improved Thanks to Intergovernmental Cooperation – 2 of 3**

The Automated Horn System refers to a stationary warning device mounted on a pole to sound an audible warning at the time an approaching train triggers activation of the railroad-highway crossing device.

Results of the Northwestern University study, as announced at a news conference on Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, demonstrate the quality of life benefits the horn system brings to Mundelein.

A survey of residents, conducted as part of the study, shows that more than 80% of residents feel their quality of life has improved as a result of the new horn system. Comments on the survey and letters to Mundelein officials express residents' gratitude and support for the automated horn system.

One resident wrote to officials, "...for the past ten years the noise has been unbearable. I am no longer awakened by the deafening sound of the trains..."

The Northwestern University study, which used video and sound recording devices to measure noise levels, show that noise levels decreased by up to 80% near the tracks and the area recording noise levels of approximately 90 decibels decreased by 87% from approximately 120 acres to 13 acres.

According to the conclusion from the Northwestern study, "...the wayside horn significantly reduces highway-rail crossing violations. It accomplishes this task while improving the quality of life for nearby residents."

Funding for the study came from a \$150,000 grant obtained by the Village of Mundelein through the Federal Unified Work Program. A 20% funding match was shared by Lake County, Metra, Railroad Controls, Ltd., Villages of Libertyville, Mundelein and Vernon Hills and Canadian National.

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## **Quality of Life Improved Thanks to Intergovernmental Cooperation – 3 of 3**

“This project would not have enjoyed such success without the partnerships, both monetarily and through time and labor, that our task force members put into it,” said Village of Mundelein Administrator Ken Marabella, who chaired the task force. “We in Mundelein are thankful that so many levels of government and private businesses were able to come together to make this project work. It’s a tremendous benefit to the people of Mundelein.”

Federal, state, county and village officials worked with the railroad companies and other private corporations for both the installation and study of the Automated Horn System.

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